GOLD KEY

SOLAR

10000-10
OCTOBER

NOW ONLY 12c

DOCTOR SOLAR

MAN OF THE ATOM

An atomic accident turns a young scientist into a fantastic being!

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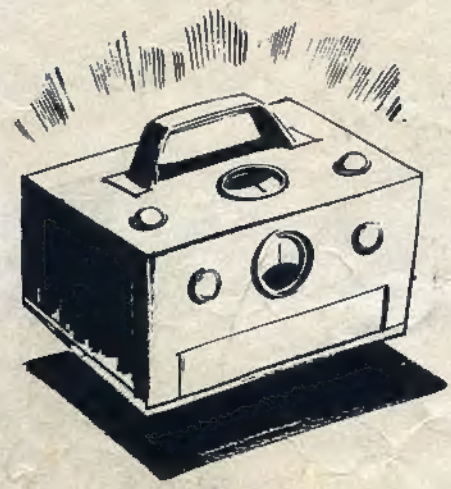
DOCTOR SOLAR



This is a geiger counter! It detects radioactivity, clicking louder and louder as the deadly rays flow toward it!

Every day brought Dr. Solar nearer the menacing source of radioactivity! This was the risk of his vital experiments!

When an atomic pile in a secret government laboratory goes critical, the geiger counter screams a warning as a man dies!

But Dr. Solar discovers a fantastic secret about himself that links him with his country's survival in the nuclear age!

DOCTOR SOLAR

SOLAR'S SECRET

A SLED, DESIGNED TO TEST A REVOLUTIONARY NEW ROCKET, SUDDENLY JUMPS ITS TRACKS DURING A TEST RUN IN ATOM VALLEY!

RACING ACROSS THE SAND AT SUPERSONIC SPEED, THE ROCKET BEARS DOWN ON GAIL SANDERS, A NEWCOMER TO THE VALLEY!

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IT'S ALL OVER! THE SLED HAS STOPPED!

THIS WAS SOME INTRODUCTION TO ATOM VALLEY!

ARE ***ALL*** YOUR PROJECTS THIS DANGEROUS, DR. SOLAR?

THIS WAS JUST BAD LUCK--

GOOD LUCK, YOU MEAN! I OWE IT TO THIS LUCKY CHARM YOU GAVE ME BACK AT COLLEGE!

LATER...

--AND THIS IS THE BUILDING WHERE YOU'LL BE WORKING!

DR. CLARKSON, GAIL AND I ARE BACK FROM OUR TOUR OF THE VALLEY!

GOOD! --I'LL MEET YOU IN THE LAB!

SOON AFTER...

DR. CLARKSON, THIS IS DR. GAIL SANDERS!

I'VE STUDIED YOUR FILE SO LONG, I FEEL WE'RE OLD FRIENDS!

THIS IS DR. BENTLY, WHO IS WORKING WITH SOLAR ON OUR ENERGY-INTO-MATTER PROJECT, AND DR. RASP WHO WILL WORK WITH YOU!

YOUR PROJECT SOUNDS FASCINATING!

IT IS! THE ATOM BOMB PROVED MATTER COULD BE TURNED INTO ENERGY...

NOW WE'RE TRYING TO *REVERSE* THAT PROCESS!

THE MACHINE DRONES ON, AND SUDDENLY...

YOU *HAVE* ACCOMPLISHED IT!

UNFORTUNATELY, IT ONLY LASTS FOR A SECOND! BENTLY AND I ARE TRYING TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE THE CONVERSION *PERMANENT!*

DR. RASP, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHOW GAIL YOUR LAB?

IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE, BUT I KNOW YOU HAVEN'T SEEN EACH OTHER FOR FIVE YEARS, SO WHY DON'T YOU SHOW HER?

HOW CONSIDERATE!

HOW *SURPRISING!* *WHY* WOULD A MAN GIVE UP A CHANCE LIKE THAT? WELL, SOME SCIENTISTS ARE ECCENTRIC!

BUT RASP HAS OTHER THINGS ON HIS MIND!

LUCKY I LOOKED AT MY WATCH! I ALMOST MISSED MY REGULAR CONTACT WITH *NURO!*

XY3 CALLING NURO!--THIS IS XY3! COME IN, SIR!

THE MESSAGE REACHES A PLANE FLYING HIGH OVER THE ARCTIC WASTELAND!

THIS IS NURO, XY3! WHAT IS YOUR PROGRESS ON THE ENERGY-TO-MATTER PROJECT?

NONE! SOLAR AND BENTLY ARE THE PROJECT SCIENTISTS! DR. CLARKSON DECIDED TO ASSIGN ONLY TWO MEN!

THEN *ELIMINATE* ONE AND TAKE HIS PLACE!

GET RID OF ONE? BUT *HOW?*

STAGE A LITTLE *ACCIDENT*--BUT BE SURE IT IS *FATAL!*

YOU HAVE NO CHOICE...

AND REMEMBER THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE!

AS DR. RASP RETURNS TO THE LAB...

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR PAPER ABOUT TRANS-URANIC ELEMENTS! BRILLIANT!

THANK YOU, DR. CLARKSON! PERHAPS, NOW IT'S COMPLETED, I CAN WORK ON THE ENERGY CONVERSION PROJECT!

I'M AFRAID NOT! I WILL NEED YOU ON A NEW PROJECT--IN THE ANTI-GRAVITY FIELD!

THEN I MUST CARRY OUT NURO'S ORDERS!

THAT NIGHT...

I DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO WAIT! SOLAR DOOMED HIMSELF BY INVITING GAIL INTO TOWN!

MY TIMING'S PERFECT! THAT CAPSULE OF ACID ON THE TIRE SHOULD CAUSE A ***BLOWOUT*** JUST AS HE HITS THE PASS!

SOON...

THEY DON'T NEED SECURITY GUARDS ON *THIS* ROAD! THE DRIVE SHOULD DISCOURAGE ANYONE!

I'D HATE TO HAVE A BLOWOUT!

SO WOULD I! BUT MY TIRES ARE NEW! LEAN BACK AND RELAX!

POP!

W-WE'RE GOING *OVER!*

LEAN TO THE LEFT, GAIL! *LEAN LEFT!*

I-IT'S NO USE--

--OUR WEIGHT CAN HELP TURN THE CAR! LEAN WAY OUT! IT'S OUR *ONLY HOPE!*

JUST IN TIME, DR. SOLAR BRINGS THE CAR TO A STOP!

ANOTHER FOOT OR TWO!

DON'T LOOK BACK! JUST CLIMB OUT—CAREFULLY!

THANK GOODNESS IT'S OVER! THAT'S TWICE TODAY YOU'VE SAVED MY LIFE!

DON'T TRY TO MAKE ME A HERO, GAIL! I WAS IN THAT CAR, TOO!

LATER, WHEN THEY RETURN TO ATOM VALLEY...

WELL-- IT CERTAINLY HAS BEEN AN EXCITING DAY!

I'M SURE YOU'LL FIND THE ROUTINE OF THE LAB TOMORROW DULL!

SOON AFTER...

I WILL *NOT* TOLERATE FAILURE! YOU *MUST* GET RID OF SOLAR OR BENTLY!

I CAN'T RISK A SECOND "ACCIDENT"!

SABOTAGE THE *ATOMIC PILE!* KILL OFF ONE OF THEM BY *RADIATION!*

YES -- I *COULD* DO THAT!

THEN YOU *WILL* DO IT, XY3! YOUR NEXT REPORT MUST TELL ME *YOU* ARE ON THE PROJECT TEAM!

TWO DAYS LATER...

I'M GOING TO GRAB A BITE AND GET BACK TO WORK ON THE ATOMIC PILE TONIGHT!

I ADMIRE YOUR ENERGY, BENTLY! I'VE HAD IT FOR THE DAY!

BEFORE BENTLY RETURNS, THE ATOMIC PILE WILL BE AT WORK ON HIS *DEATH!*

I'LL FIX THE GAUGE TO LOOK LIKE THE SAFETY ROD IS STILL IN PLACE! BUT IT WILL BE BOUNCING ENOUGH NEUTRONS AROUND TO KILL AN ARMY!

THE RADIATION COUNT WILL BUILD SLOWLY! THE GAMMA RAYS AND NEUTRONS WILL TAKE CARE OF BENTLY AFTER I'M GONE!

I WANT TO RUN OFF ONE MORE CHECK, SOLAR! SHOULDN'T TAKE MORE THAN TWO HOURS!

IF YOU NEED ME, BENTLY, I'LL BE IN MY ROOM!

AN HOUR LATER

CLAWNING! CLAWNING!

THE RADIATION ALARM! THE BACKGROUND COUNT MUST BE *GOING UP!*

NO WONDER! THAT CONTROL ROD IS **OUT TOO FAR!** IF I DON'T ACT FAST, THE WHOLE VALLEY WILL **BLOW SKY-HIGH!**

MEANWHILE...

I FEEL LIKE A HEEL SITTING HERE WHILE BENTLY'S WORKING!

IT'S PROBABLY FOOLISH, BUT I FEEL BENTLY NEEDS ME! I'LL JUST POP IN AND CHECK!

BENTLY! THE RADIATION ALARM --

--I KNOW, SOLAR! **STAY OUT!**

YOU CAN'T FIX IT ALONE --

IT MUST BE FIXED OR THE LAB WILL BLOW UP! BUT KEEP OUT! THE RADIATION IS ALREADY OVER FIVE HUNDRED ROENTGENS! STAY AND YOU'LL **DIE!**

OVER FIVE HUNDRED ROENTGENS! THAT'S A *FATAL* DOSE! LET ME GET YOU OUT--

LE-LET ME FINISH ALONE-- N- NO SENSE-- IN BOTH-- OF US--GE-GETTING --RADIATION POISONING!

BENTLY!

I'VE GOT TO WORK THIS CONTROL ROD BACK INTO THE PILE!

MAYBE I CAN'T SEE THE RADIATION, BUT I SURE CAN FEEL THE HEAT IT'S GIVING OFF! I'VE GOT TO WORK *FASTER!*

FEARFULLY, DR. SOLAR TAKES A READING ON HIS POCKET DOSIMETER...

FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY ROENTGENS SINCE I'VE BEEN IN HERE! --I-I'VE *HAD IT!*

BENTLY'S DEAD!

I SHOULD BE DEAD, TOO! BUT I HAVEN'T *ONE SYMPTOM* OF RADIATION POISONING! IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

THIS RATE METER SAYS... I *AM* GIVING OFF RADIATION! WHY, IT'S AS IF I WERE AN *ATOMIC PILE!*

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

SOLAR CONTACTS HIS CHIEF ON A CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION-PHONE...

DR. CLARKSON! YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT I'M GOING TO SAY, BUT LISTEN!

QUICKLY, DR. SOLAR RELATES THE STARTLING EVENTS...

BENTLY IS DEAD, BUT I AM *LIVING!* DESPITE HAVING BEEN EXPOSED TO FATAL DOSES OF RADIATION! IN FACT, NOW *I'M* GIVING OFF RADIATION!

YOU ARE GIVING OFF RADIATION? IMPOSSIBLE!

BELIEVE ME! I AM DANGEROUS! I MUST BE ISOLATED! GET ME SOME CADMIUM-LEAD SHIELDING TO LINE MY OFFICE WALLS!

HOW COULD YOU SURVIVE WHILE BENTLY--

--I CAN'T ANSWER THAT! ALL I KNOW IS I'M ALIVE --AND DANGEROUS!

LATE THAT NIGHT, DR. SOLAR WORKS IN SECRET...

THERE! NOW MY RADIATION CAN'T PENETRATE THE WALLS AND HARM ANYONE!

THIS TRANSPARENT CADMIUM-LEAD FILM LETS US SEE YOU IN SAFETY!

NOW I NEED CADMIUM-LEAD TO LINE MY CLOTHES!

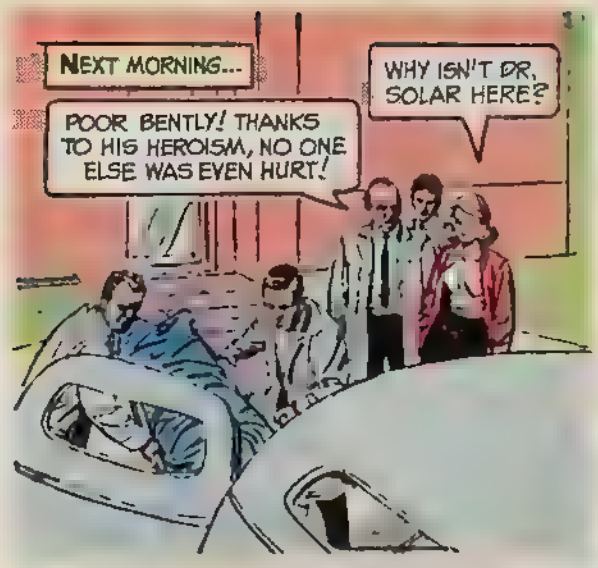
A FEW HOURS LATER...

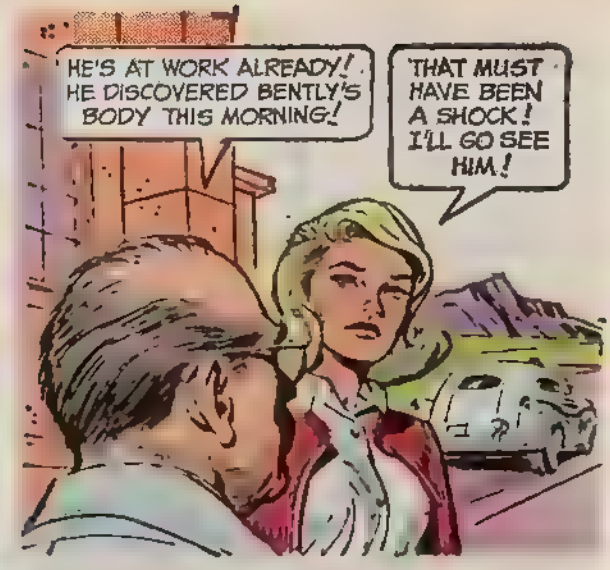
WITH THIS PROTECTIVE CLOTHING YOU SHOULD BE SAFE IN HERE--BUT NOT FOR MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES!

THAT SHOULD BE LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN *HOW* YOU *SURVIVED!*

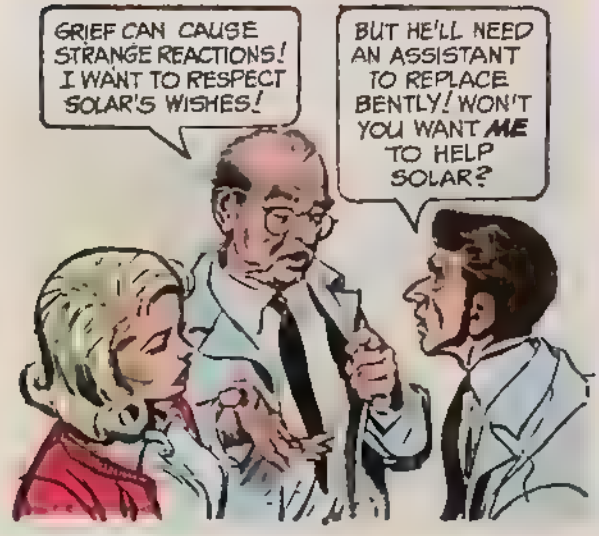
SO-SOLAR!
I THOUGHT SO! I NO LONGER HAVE ANY HEARTBEAT! NOW, CHECK MY METABOLISM!
MOMENTS LATER...
IMPOSSIBLE! FIRST, NO HEARTBEAT -- NOW, NO METABOLISM!
I'M ALIVE--YET I'M NOT ALIVE!
BUT YOU TALK, YOU MOVE, YOU THINK-- YOU MUST BE ALIVE!
BUT I'M NOT THE SAME AS I USED TO BE! RADIATION TRANS-MUTED MY BODY'S CHEMICAL MAKE-UP!
YOU MEAN THE ELEMENTS IN YOUR BODY HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO DIFFERENT ONES?
EXACTLY! AND THOSE ARE RADIO-ACTIVE ELEMENTS! WATCH THE GEIGER COUNTER--!

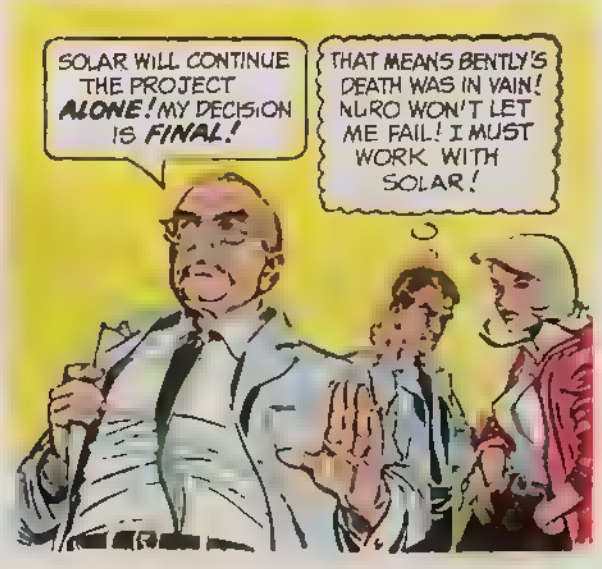
YOU ARE RIGHT! YOU'RE GIVING OFF A HIGH LEVEL OF RADIATION!
CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!
EVERY PART OF ME, EVEN MY EYES, GIVES OFF DANGEROUS RADIATION!
CLICK! CLICK!
FANTASTIC! BUT I HAVE SEEN PROOF! YOU'RE A WALKING ATOMIC PILE!
YOU'D BETTER LEAVE NOW, DR CLARKSON! YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO ME LONG ENOUGH!
WHAT CAN I TELL THE OTHERS?
TELL THEM BENTLY WAS KILLED BY RADIATION! SAY I AM CARRYING ON OUR WORK ALONE! BUT TELL NO MORE! MY SECRET MUST BE KEPT UNTIL I KNOW MORE ABOUT MY STRANGE NEW POWERS!


NEXT MORNING...
WHY ISN'T DR. SOLAR HERE?
POOR BENTLY! THANKS TO HIS HEROISM, NO ONE ELSE WAS EVEN HURT!


HE'S AT WORK ALREADY! HE DISCOVERED BENTLY'S BODY THIS MORNING!
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A SHOCK! I'LL GO SEE HIM!

I'M AFRAID YOU CAN'T, GAIL! DR. SOLAR HAS TURNED HIS OFFICE INTO HIS LIVING QUARTERS! HE WANTS TO FINISH THEIR PROJECT WITHOUT INTERRUPTION!
DR. SOLAR
SURELY, HE DOESN'T EXPECT TO STAY IN THERE--LIKE A HERMIT!


GRIEF CAN CAUSE STRANGE REACTIONS! I WANT TO RESPECT SOLAR'S WISHES!
BUT HE'LL NEED AN ASSISTANT TO REPLACE BENTLY! WON'T YOU WANT ME TO HELP SOLAR?

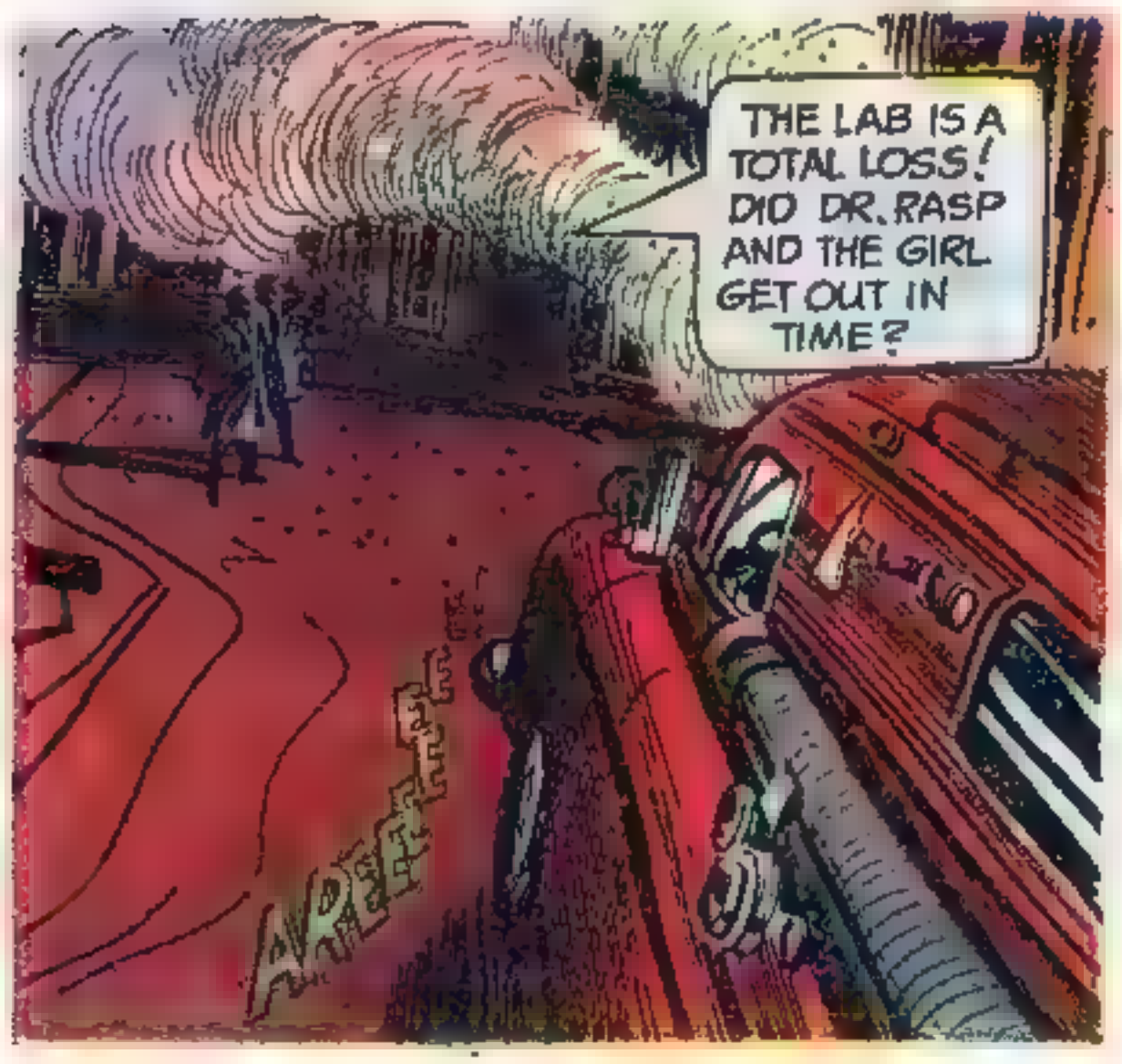

SOLAR WILL CONTINUE THE PROJECT ALONE! MY DECISION IS FINAL!
THAT MEANS BENTLY'S DEATH WAS IN VAIN! NURO WON'T LET ME FAIL! I MUST WORK WITH SOLAR!

LATER...
SECURITY JUST COMPLETED ITS CHECK ON THE ATOMIC PILE!
WHAT DID THEY FIND OUT ABOUT THAT MISPLACED CONTROL ROD?
THEY CONCLUDE THE WHOLE THING WAS AN ACCIDENT!
THEY'RE WRONG! I AM SURE IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT--IT WAS SABOTAGE!
SOLAR! THERE ARE ONLY TEN SCIENTISTS HERE CAPABLE OF HANDLING THAT ATOMIC PILE! SURELY, YOU'RE NOT ACCUSING ONE OF THEM OF BEING A SABOTEUR!
I AM! AND I INTEND TO FIND OUT WHO CHANGED ME FROM A NORMAL HUMAN BEING INTO AN ATOMIC FORCE!
MEANWHILE...
BUT, SIR, CLARKSON REFUSED TO LET ME WORK WITH SOLAR!
XY3-- YOU'VE BEEN WARNED!
REMEMBER THIS... YOU WILL LIVE ONLY AS LONG AS YOU DO MY WORK!

DOCTOR SOLAR

AN ACCIDENT IN ATOM VALLEY DESTROYS THE VITAL ELECTRONIC FURNACE AND DELAYS DR. SOLAR'S ENERGY CONVERSION PROJECT! NOW HIS EXPERIMENTS ARE USELESS UNLESS DR. SOLAR CAN FIND A NEW WAY TO CREATE

AN ATOMIC INFERNO



MOMENTS LATER...

THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE! HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

THE ELECTRONIC FURNACE COULDN'T PRODUCE THE HEAT WE NEEDED! -- IT EXPLODED!

WE TRIED TO SAVE THE FURNACE, BUT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE!

LATER..

DR. CLARKSON, I'D LIKE TO SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT CAUSED THAT EXPLOSION!

BUT *HOW* CAN YOU GET TO THE HEAT LAB?

YOUR RADIATION WILL CONTAMINATE THE CORRIDOR!

WE'LL HAVE TO *CLEAR* THE CORRIDOR! KEEP EVERYONE OUT!

THE WAY IS CLEARED AND SOLAR HEADS FOR THE HEAT LAB...

IF CLARKSON ORDERED THE HALLS CLEARED, WHY IS SOLAR OUT THERE?

--AND WHAT MADE THAT GEIGER COUNTER REACT WHEN HE WENT PAST?

CLICK! CLICK!

IF THERE WERE ANY CLUES, THE FIRE DESTROYED THEM! MAYBE GAIL CAN TELL ME WHAT WENT WRONG!

SOON...

I WANT EVERYTHING YOU HAVE— TAPES -- PHOTO RECORDINGS -- ***ANYTHING*** THAT CAN HELP ME FIND OUT WHAT WENT WRONG!

WHY NOT LET ***US*** FIND OUT?

NEITHER YOU NOR RASP FORESAW THE EXPLOSION! MAYBE I CAN FIND YOUR MISTAKE!

SURE IT'S EASY TO FIND *OUR* MISTAKES FROM BEHIND THAT WINDOW!

I'M SORRY' BUT I HAVE REASONS FOR WANTING TO STAY IN HERE!

..YOU CAN SPEND YOUR LIFE THERE FOR ALL I CARE, *DR. SOLAR!*

I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS! --HE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME PERSON SINCE DR. BENTLY DIED!

MEANWHILE...

--I'LL PHOTOGRAPH ALL THE DATA ON THE ACCIDENT FOR YOU!

THAT'S *NOT ENOUGH!* FIND OUT MORE ABOUT *SOLAR!*-- DON'T FAIL *THIS TIME!*

THE NEXT DAY, SOLAR CONCENTRATES ON CREATING A NEW ELECTRONIC FURNACE.

WE NEED THE HEAT OF AN ATOM BOMB!— AND WE NEED TO PRODUCE IT SAFELY!

MY PENCIL! WHAT MADE IT CATCH FIRE?

DR. SOLAR DEMONSTRATES A STRANGE POWER!

WATCH THIS BEAKER OF ALCOHOL!

GOOD HEAVENS! WHAT'S MAKING IT BOIL?

NOW WATCH THIS PIECE OF STEEL!

BY *CONCENTRATING*, I CAN TURN THE ENERGY IN MY BODY INTO *HEAT!* --ENOUGH TO MELT THIS STEEL, MAYBE ENOUGH TO REPLACE OUR ELECTRONIC FURNACE!

WE CAN MAKE UP THE LOST TIME ON YOUR ENERGY CONVERSION PROJECT IF YOU'RE RIGHT!

LATER, IN THE HEAT LAB, DR. SOLAR'S BODY CHANGES INTO A SEARING ATOMIC INFERNO!

INCREDIBLE! SOLAR HAS CONVERTED HIMSELF INTO A MASS OF HEAT!

UNDER HEAT AS INTENSE AS AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION, ATOMS FUSE AND MOLECULAR STRUCTURES CHANGE...

THEN, GRADUALLY, DR. SOLAR RETURNS TO HIS HUMAN FORM!

IT WORKED, DR. CLARKSON, IT WORKED!

UNBELIEVABLE! -- I CAN'T HELP WONDERING WHAT OTHER POWERS YOU HAVE!

SUDDENLY--

I FE-FEEL FAINT--!

I WAS AFRAID THIS WOULD HAPPEN! SOLAR HAS DRAINED OFF HIS ATOMIC ENERGY!

DR. SOLAR! TRY TO ***RENEW*** YOUR ENERGY BY EXPOSING YOURSELF TO THE ATOMIC PILE! CAN YOU MAKE IT?

I-I'LL TRY!

GOT TO-GET -CLOSER!

THE DEADLY NEUTRON BEAM BLASTS NEW LIFE INTO GOLAR'S BODY!

MINUTES LATER...

APPARENTLY THE RADIO-ACTIVE ELEMENTS IN YOUR BODY HAVE A SHORT HALF-LIFE! BUT YOU *CAN* RESTORE YOUR LOST ENERGY!

MEANWHILE...

THERE! NOW NURO HAS A COMPLETE PHOTO-GRAPHIC RECORD OF THE ACCIDENT!

JUST A MOMENT!

JUST IN TIME! LUCKY MY CAMERA LOOKS LIKE A DOSIMETER --I MIGHT HAVE BEEN CAUGHT!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

COME IN, GAIL! I HAVE TO SEE DR. CLARKSON BEFORE WE BEGIN WORKING!-- EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT!

OH! DR. RASP WENT OUT WITHOUT HIS DOSIMETER!

DR. RASP!— YOU FORGOT YOUR DOSIMETER!

WAIT A MINUTE! THIS ISN'T A DOSIMETER-- IT'S A CAMERA!

SUDDENLY...

DR. RASP! -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THIS CAMERA?

SO YOU'VE DISCOVERED MY SECRET! WELL, I THINK I CAN SILENCE YOU!

DR. SOLAR— HELP!

MEANWHILE...

DR. SOLAR --HELP-- COME QUICKLY TO -- CLICK!

GAIL!-- GAIL, WHERE ARE YOU?

--I HOPE SHE'S STILL IN RANGE OF ONE OF THE INTERCOM CAMERAS!

DR. SOLAR'S ELECTRONIC SEARCH PAYS OFF!

WHY THAT'S RASP!-- WHAT IS HE DOING TO GAIL?

THE *ALTITUDE CHAMBER* WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!

NOT FAR AWAY--

TH-THOSE EXPERIMENTS --USED UP TOO MUCH-- OF MY ENERGY--I'VE GOT TO REACH GAIL!

DR. CLARKSON-- I'M IN CORRIDOR B--- COME--- HURRY!

WITHIN MINUTES...

HIS ENERGY IS FADING FAST!--HOW CAN I GET HIM BACK TO THE ATOMIC PILE?

THIS RADIOACTIVE IODINE MIGHT DO THE TRICK!

SECONDS LATER...

THANKS -- FEEL STRONGER! -- GAIL, WE MUST **SAVE GAIL!**

WHAT HAPPENED, DR. SOLAR?

SOON...

--AND HE LOCKED HER IN HERE!

THE CHAMBER IS SET FOR AN ATMOSPHERE THAT WILL MAKE HER BODY **EXPLODE!**

WE'VE GOT TO SAVE HER!

IT'S NO USE! WE CAN'T STOP THE MACHINE IN TIME AND THE DOOR WON'T OPEN AGAINST THAT PRESSURE!

MAYBE I CAN **MELT** A HOLE IN THE STEEL TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE!

I'LL CONVERT SOME OF MY ENERGY TO HEAT!

SHE'S SAVED! NOW TO FIND *RASP!*

WHOOOOOOSH!

RASP! -- DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

DON'T WORRY, *WE WON'T!*

MEANWHILE...

--THEY'RE COMING FOR ME! -- *THEY KNOW!*

THEN YOU FAILED AND YOU MUST *DIE!*

NO! NO!

A MOMENT LATER...

--I'M AFRAID WE'RE TOO LATE!

HE'S DEAD! BUT HOW?

A RADIO!--THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE HIGHER UP!

THEN HE WAS MURDERED!

PROBABLY!-- UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, MURDERED BY THE SAME PERSON WHO ORDERED THE ACCIDENT THAT KILLED BENTLY!

--THEN WE HAVEN'T FOUND THE REAL VILLAIN AFTER ALL!

--UNTIL WE FIND OUT WHO WAS BEHIND RASP, ATOM VALLEY WILL NEVER BE SAFE!

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CHECKMATE • SNAGGLEPUSS

look for the gold key

GOLD KEY

ON SALE NOW, EVERYWHERE

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SOLAR PIN-UP NO. 1

Prowlus